

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1267  
By Mumpower

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Carol Martin "Bill" Gatton upon his selection as Junior Achievement Hall of Fame Laureate for 2004.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who through their extraordinary efforts have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Bill Gatton, who has recently been selected as 2004 Junior Achievement Hall of Fame Laureate; and

WHEREAS, beginning the cultivation of his keen entrepreneurial skills at the young age of eight, Mr. Gatton grew an acre of watermelons and cantaloupes and sold the fruit along the roadside in front of his father's farm; and

WHEREAS, it was also at age eight that Mr. Gatton purchased his first real estate, six acres for six hundred dollars, and at age twelve he sold the land for one thousand two hundred dollars; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to acquire money for college, Mr. Gatton continued to raise watermelons and cantaloupes, as well as tobacco, and he fed, showed, and sold calves each year; his agricultural skills earned him numerous honors at 4-H Club and Future Farmers of America contests; and

WHEREAS, upon graduating from high school, Mr. Gatton began his matriculation at the University of Kentucky (UK), majoring in Agriculture; after two years of studying Agriculture at the University, he transferred to the college of Business and Economics; and

WHEREAS, during the last two years of his time at UK, Mr. Gatton's interest in the automotive industry was sparked, as he worked as a part-time salesman at a Lexington Chevrolet dealership; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from UK, Mr. Gatton served this Nation with distinction for two years as a Lieutenant in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, continuing his education after his stint in the Army, Mr. Gatton earned his Master of Business Administration degree in Finance and Banking from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gatton then moved back to his home state of Kentucky, with the hope and dream of starting his own business; and

WHEREAS, while working at a local bank in Lexington, Mr. Gatton began seeing "funny looking little cars" around town; he soon discovered that they were Volkswagen Beetles and decided that a Volkswagen franchise would be a good business venture for him; and

WHEREAS, after convincing the Volkswagen distributor in Columbus, Ohio to award him the franchise for Owensboro, Kentucky and after obtaining the twenty-five thousand dollars required for capital from his father, Mr. Gatton opened his first dealership and became the youngest Volkswagen dealer in America at the age of twenty-six; and

WHEREAS, his success with the Volkswagen dealership was only the beginning of a lucrative business career; and

WHEREAS, six years later, Mr. Gatton was offered a large dealership in Decatur, Illinois by Ford, but he decided instead to purchase the Chevrolet and Cadillac dealership in Bristol, where he has continued to do business since April 1, 1967; Mr. Gatton has also established Acura, Honda, Mazda, Nissan, Saturn, Suzuki, and Ford dealerships, and owns dealerships in Austin, Texas and in Huntsville, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, his entrepreneurial success has not been limited solely to the automotive industry; in 1975, Mr. Gatton and a small group of friends purchased the largest bank in Owensboro, Kentucky and its assets have since increased from ninety-eight million dollars to three billion dollars; Mr. Gatton has also been active in real estate investments in Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, a community-minded citizen of the highest order, Mr. Gatton has made numerous contributions to the secondary education systems in Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Kentucky; he has also made humble, yet generous contributions to the

University of Kentucky and the business school at the University of Kentucky at Lexington has been named the Carol Martin Gatton College of Business and Economics in his honor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gatton has received numerous awards and honors for his contributions to society, including many accolades from Honda and Chevrolet; induction into the University of Kentucky College Hall of Fame and the Junior Achievement Hall of Fame in Owensboro; and he has received the Model Citizen of the Year award from Owensboro; and

WHEREAS, although a proud Kentuckian Mr. Gatton epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gatton is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Leigh; they are the proud parents of an eight-year-old daughter, Chase Carol; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Mr. Gatton upon his most recent achievement and for his dedication to the State of Tennessee and its citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Carol Martin "Bill" Gatton for his meritorious service to the State of Tennessee, congratulate him upon his selection as Junior Achievement Hall of Fame 2004 Laureate, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.